

# **Abercrombie Votes No on Iraq Funding, Yes on GI Bill of Rights, Extending Unemployment Benefits**

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U.S. Representative Neil Abercrombie voted today against \$165.4-billion in additional funding for U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, in a separate amendment to the Supplemental Appropriation Bill considered by the House, he voted to provide college benefits to military veterans and to extend unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks.

“To date, Congress has given President Bush more than \$600 billion dollars for his war in Iraq, and to date, billions of those dollars have been wasted, stolen or unaccounted for. In Afghanistan, we’ve spent \$16-billion on training the Afghan National Army and Police, yet after six years of training, exactly two Army units out of 105 are fully capable of conducting their primary mission,” said Abercrombie, who chairs the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces. “This Administration still doesn’t have a detailed plan in Afghanistan, and they still don’t have a clue in Iraq. Giving them another blank check borders on criminal negligence.” Abercrombie voted Thursday on the 2008 Supplemental Appropriation Bill, which includes war funding for Iraq and Afghanistan and in a separate amendmnt, creates a new veterans education benefit, patterned after the Post WWII and Vietnam era GI Bills, and extends unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks for those who are still looking for work and whose jobless benefits have been exhausted.

“I co-sponsored the legislation creating the GI Bill to put our money where our mouth is. It restores the promise of a full, four-year college education for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan and makes them part of an American economic recovery, just like the veterans of World War II,” Abercrombie said. “It’s a down payment on the debt we owe the men and women we’ve sent to war.”

The bill extends unemployment benefits by up to 13 weeks in every state for workers who have exhausted their benefits. The number of Americans looking for work has grown by 800,000 over the last year, and the number of American jobs has declined by 260,000 since the beginning of 2008.